

STAFF RETREAT/WORK SESSION

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Norfolk, Nebraska were invited to attend a staff retreat/work session on Monday, April 13, 2009 beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the Library Meeting Room, 308 Prospect Avenue, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Mayor Sue Fuchtman called the meeting to order.

Roll call found the following members present: Mayor Sue Fuchtman and Councilpersons Coy, Fauss, Reeder, Saunders, Van Dyke and Wilson. Absent: Brenneman and Lange.

Staff members present were City Administrator Al Roder, Public Works Director Dennis Smith, City Attorney Clint Schukei, City Clerk Beth Deck, Wastewater Plant Superintendent Todd Boling, Water & Sewer Director Dennis Watts, Transportation, Building & Grounds Director Jim Koch, Human Resources Director Sheila Schukei, Park Superintendent Pat Mrsny, Solid Waste Manager Gary Lund, Housing Director Sheila Miller, Information Systems Manager Jim McKenzie, Fire Chief Shane Weidner, Property/Operations Manager Gary Miller, Finance Officer Randy Gates, and Police Chief Bill Mizner.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Norfolk Daily News, and notice of the meeting was given to the Mayor and all members of the Council prior to the meeting.

The Mayor presided and the City Clerk recorded the proceedings.

The Mayor informed the public about the location of the current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room and accessible to members of the public.

City Administrator Al Roder reviewed the City's Mission Statement with elected officials:

"The City of Norfolk Mission is to provide quality public services in an effective and efficient manner to enhance the common good and quality of life including citizen involvement."

City Administrator Al Roder stated the purpose of the meeting is to review the Preliminary Action Plan for the elected officials' five goals. Roder stated the goals will be placed on the April 20, 2009 City Council meeting for formal consideration. The goals are as follows:

- #1 – Creation of a Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan
- #2 – Enhance Parks: Memorial Field, Aquatic Center and Ta-Ha-Zouka Land
- #3 – Create an Arts and Culture Coordinating Committee
- #4 – Develop an Economic Program spearheaded by the City of Norfolk
- #5 – Develop a plan for new City Administrative offices

Goal #1 -- Park Superintendent Pat Mrsny feels it is important for the City to hire a firm to develop the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan that would extend out 10-15 years. However, Mrsny said the City would be able to provide guidance on proposed projects. Mrsny stated it was earlier felt that hiring a firm to develop a Master Plan would cost \$100,000+. However, Mrsny feels the Plan can be developed for \$60,000 to \$80,000.

Councilperson Fauss would like to keep the "costs down by controlling the outcome of the Plan" if possible, otherwise the money could be spent on improvements instead of planning.

Councilperson Wilson has concerns with another Plan/Study because the City spent \$60,000 on a landscape study and there are no visible results.

Goal #2 – Councilperson Wilson is getting a lot of negative feedback from citizens about the proposed Aquatic Center. Wilson questioned whether Keno funds can be used for improvements to just Memorial Field.

Public Works Director Dennis Smith stated the Memorial Field Improvements project is still a huge expense.

Councilperson Fauss said the improvements to the concession stand and bathhouse are important but some of the improvements could be delayed if the baseball fields are moved to Ta-Ha-Zouka Park. Fauss feels the improvements needs to be “sold to the citizens” without the aquatic portion.

Councilperson Wilson feels elected officials should move forward with Memorial Field improvements but not “push the water park.”

Property/Operations Manager Gary Miller stated the City’s pool system needs to be addressed. Miller stated the football field is “really a school issue.”

City Attorney Clint Schukei stated the Norfolk Public Schools has a broader tax base than the City of Norfolk and should be involved in the improvements so that the entire burden is not on Norfolk taxpayers.

Roder said the Norfolk Public Schools “have said they will help” but no formal commitment has been made. The turf project alone at Memorial Field will cost approximately \$1 million. Roder stated the pools in Norfolk don’t have another 4-5 years of life. Roder suggested staff move forward with the creation of a Recreation Facilities Committee (resource team) involving stakeholders from the public schools, parochial schools, Legion baseball and Aquatics facility steering committee. Roder explained the City’s biggest involvement will be to help coordinate the team and provide information.

Goal #3 – Human Resources Director Sheila Schukei has done some preliminary work on defining the purpose of an Arts and Culture Coordinating Committee. Schukei suggested the following:

“Arts and culture are tools for attracting visitors to the community and to provide entertainment for those individuals living in the community. Resources such as libraries, museums, parks, cultural centers and performing arts, strengthen human, economic, physical and social improvement.

The Arts and Culture Coordinating Committee will be comprised of representatives from those organizations and agencies that provide arts and cultural experiences for the community as well as other interested individuals. The committee will gather and contribute information to a community calendar of events activities that will be taking place.

This Committee will not be a funding organization; however, it will collaborate when possible on cultural events in the community.”

Roder explained the City can help bring together a representative board and provide some support to start the Committee. However, this is a citizens group and not a committee appointed by the City.

Goal #4 – Roder explained the City has changed its focus to be part of the revised Elkhorn Valley Economic Development Council (EVEDC) with the City being a key component. Roder stated Madison County is considering increasing funding from \$70,000 to \$100,000 annually and is challenging the City of Norfolk to increase its funding from \$46,000 to \$100,000.

Councilperson Fauss feels increasing natural gas capacity for Norfolk should be a high priority.

Roder stated increasing natural gas capacity to Norfolk is much better suited to be a part of the economic development plan for the area.

Councilperson Van Dyke said there isn't any market for increased natural gas right now.

Goal #5 – City Administrator Al Roder reviewed some of the sites considered for Administrative offices in the past. Roder stated the space needs analysis is complete.

Councilpersons Reeder and Van Dyke feels this is a great opportunity for Norfolk to build a new facility instead of renovating an existing building.

Councilperson Fauss “would like to agree” but the economy isn't good. Fauss suggested taking “baby steps” since it will be tough to complete all five goals.

Roder reminded elected officials Goal #5 is to develop a plan for new City Administrative offices and the earliest construction could begin is the spring of 2010.

Councilperson Wilson feels this is not the time, financially, to renovate or build a new City office. Wilson feels, however, elected officials should move forward with getting a plan in place. Wilson doesn't feel a bond issue will pass at this time.

Councilperson Coy wants to move forward with new construction and have the facility last for 70-100 years.

Finance Officer Randy Gates stated it is usually tough to pass a bond election on city hall issues.

Other items discussed from the Strategic Planning & Focus Session held in January 2009 were the Values; Opportunities, Standard Operating Procedures and Communication.

City Administrator Al Roder will coordinate a Citizens Focus Group with Mary Kay Uhing as facilitator. The group will be made up of 10-12 citizens and will give elected officials the opportunity to listen to constituents. The City Council will meet as a whole with the Citizens Focus Group.

Roder updated elected officials on the Youth Council meeting with the group from Minnesota. Roder will try to set up a date(s) in June for the gathering.

Councilperson Fauss moved, seconded by Councilperson Saunders to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. Roll call: Ayes: Councilpersons Coy, Fauss, Reeder, Saunders, Van Dyke, Wilson and Mayor Fuchtman. Nays: None. Absent: Brenneman and Lange. Motion carried.

Sue Fuchtman
Mayor

ATTEST:

Elizabeth A. Deck
City Clerk

(S E A L)